



## **STATEMENT REGARDING**

**Senate Bill 154: *AAC the Governance and Administration of  
Bradley International Airport***  
**Senate Bill 692: *AAC Studying the Feasibility and Impact of the Sale of  
Bradley International Airport***  
**House Bill 6270: *AAC the Privatization of Connecticut's Airports***

**Transportation and Commerce Committees  
February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

The MetroHartford Alliance is Hartford's Chamber of Commerce and the region's economic development leader. Our investors include businesses of all sizes, health care providers, institutions of higher education, and 34 municipalities. The Alliance's mission is to ensure that the Hartford Region competes aggressively and successfully for jobs, talent and capital so that it thrives as one of the country's premier places for all people to live, work, play, and raise a family.

Among the key initiatives of the Alliance's four-year strategic plan is a strong focus on transportation infrastructure investment, as well as the enhancement and promotion of Bradley International Airport as a key economic development driver for our state. In particular, we are working with the Bradley Board to ensure that the reinstatement of the direct international flight to Amsterdam will be successful and help us promote increased international business traffic and business development with the direct exchange of commerce and capital, talent and tourism opportunities. The success of the Delta service to Amsterdam is critical to attracting additional international carriers.

Overall, our investors are very supportive of Bradley Airport being a robust airport system, and we recognize the tremendous value of having an international airport located in our region. We applaud the Department of Transportation for its maintenance of the airport and the outstanding staff who perform the airport's vital marketing and route development functions each day. One of the legislative proposals before the committee today addresses the governance of the airport, and we agree that it is important to consider whether the current governing structure enhances the airport's ability to grow.

For example, providing the Bradley Board of Directors more autonomy could facilitate hiring decisions, including setting appropriate compensation, regarding staff at the airport and would also give the Board greater control over the airport's budget for marketing and route development. As a result, the Board would determine how and when all airport staff are approved for travel for route development and marketing purposes.

Such autonomy would put Bradley on par with other states' privately-owned and operated airports, with whom we are competing for direct flights and international service. Those airports have direct control over their marketing dollars and, therefore, greater flexibility assembling the incentive packages that are critical to attract new airlines. Bradley is at a disadvantage and has potentially missed out on opportunities to grow based on this lack of autonomy.

With regard to either a proposed sale or the proposed privatization of the airport, we urge legislators to take into account today's economic climate and its impact on the terms of any sale or management contract agreement for the airport. A sale or lease at an inappropriate price could potentially penalize the state in the future.

We look forward to working together with the committee this legislative session and ask you to support increased autonomy for the Bradley Board of Directors to support the marketing efforts of one of our state's key economic drivers.